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Copiah-Lincoln Community College

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Spring 2001

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Nancy Dykes
Copiah-Lincoln Community College
Literary Hall of Fame, 2001

Mrs. Nancy Dykes, a native of Copiah county, is a graduate of Copiah-Lincoln Community College. After Co-Lin she received both her B. A. and M. A. degrees from Mississippi College. She has 48 hours post graduate study the University of Southern Mississippi, Mississippi College, and Auburn University. She is married to Dr. Jerry Dykes, former mathematics instructor at Co-Lin and has a daughter—Carole Dykes Bass and a son-in-law Justin W. Bass. Carole is a part-time instructor of Oral Communication in Copiah-Lincoln's Division of Humanities.

Mrs. Dykes served as English instructor at Co-Lin from January of 1966 until her retirement in May of 2000—a total of 34 years. She is a member of the National Council of Teachers of English, of Teaching English in the Two-Year College, the Mississippi Community/Junior College Faculty Association, Mississippi Folklore Society, the Copiah-Lincoln Education Association, and served as secretary for the Mississippi Community College Creative Association.

She holds honorary membership in Kappa Delta Pi Honor Society in Education, Delta Omicron Music Fraternity, Sigma Tau Delta English Honorary Fraternity, Phi Theta Kappa Community College Honor Society, and member and faculty sponsor of Sigma Kappa Delta Community College English Honor Society.

Mrs. Dykes has won numerous honors during her long career. She served as historian from 1997-200 on the Sigma Kappa Delta

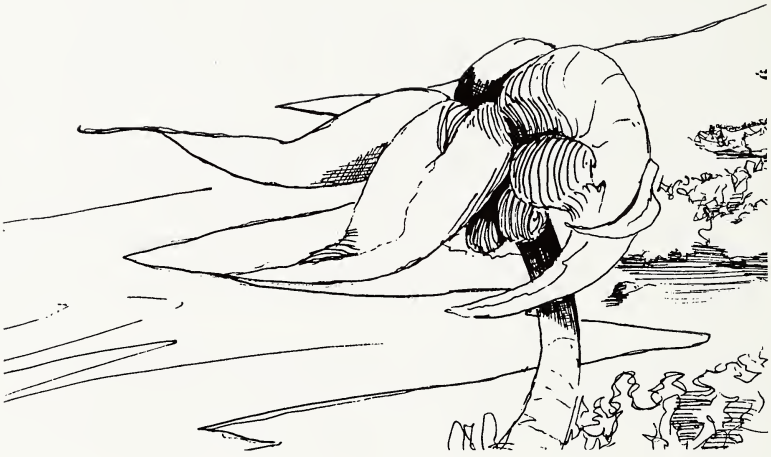
Executive Board. She was selected Co-Lin's Outstanding Academic Instructor in 1997, and Outstanding Humanities Instructor for the State of Mississippi in 1996. She was selected to attend the Lamplighters Conference, was nominated by a former student to be in Who's Who Among America's Teachers in 1996, and was a NISOD recipient in 1993. She is also a former Outstanding Young Woman of America and Outstanding Educator of America.

In addition to her teaching awards, Mrs. Dykes has won many awards in her favorite sport—racewalking. She has over 200 trophies and medals from local, state, and national events. She is currently ranked number 1 in the Grand Masters Division in the Mississippi Track Club's Grand Prix listing. She, in 1999, represented Mississippi in racewalking at the National Senior Games in Orlando, Florida—at which she won two gold medals—and in 1997 represented Mississippi in racewalking at the National Senior Sports Classic in Tucson, Arizona—winning a fourth place ribbon.
She is a member of the Mississippi Track Club and the Gulf Coast Running Club.

In addition to all of this, while at Copiah-Lincoln she was advisor and founder of the former English Club which in 1996 became Sigma Kappa Delta, the English Honorary Society for Community Colleges. Because of her, Co-Lin was the first community college in the state of Mississippi to have a chapter—Delta Alpha—of SKD.

It is for all this that Co-Lin, the Division of Humanities, and Sigma Kappa Delta name Mrs. Nancy Dykes as the 2001 recipient of the Literary Hall of Fame Award.

poetry



Illustrator: Jacob Smith

Seth Easterling
Wesson Attendance Center

My Sweetheart

In my life there is someone dear,
I hope and pray she will always stay near.
Our memories I keep deep in my heart,
With time passing on will never depart.
My everyday life the way that I feel,
It's distinguished by those good and real.
I hold very special memories of my sweetheart.
Her hands have a touch that's strong and mild;
But they're soft enough to cradle a child!
Her eyes are so steady they can see inside,
At every little secret you thought you could hide.
A voice so soft you can barely hear,
Yet strong enough to display any fear.
My prayer and hope is that in some little way,
I'll reflect her love in what I do and say,
Each and every day of the week.

Marcy Smith
Wesson Attendance Center

Seasons of a Tree

Trees are a thing of mystery,
No one knows their history.

Their spring beauty
Soon turns to maturity.

Their summer shade
In the fall fades.

Hues of red and gold,
In the fall, they do take hold.

As the winter months appear,
Their royal beauty disappears.

During the winter their beauty sleeps,

Logan Carr
Wesson Attendance Center

Society Today

The world around me surprises me everyday
So full of hatred comments without delay.
So surprisingly swift with deceit
The world around me, I can't seem to defeat.

The world around me has no sincerity.
Some people just hate, and give no charity.
The society just has no meaning.
With some who don't care about other human beings.

The world around me keeps me down.
Seeing all those homeless children frown.
The world around me needs a change.
With\out everyone's effort it will always stay the same.

Amanda McManus
Wesson Attendance Center

Regrets

Full of sorrow, full of grief
Regrets are common in my belief.
Unreliable, uncertain, unmentioned,
Regret and remorse are now my name.

Irrelative, weakened but relaxed
Regrets are always a burden on my back.
Remised, yet unforgettable remote
Repentance, repulsed, and ravished.

Regrets will never be lavished.
Apprehensive, unapproved, and arduous
My arid regrets will never be obvious.
Obtained by my obtrusive disgrace,
Regret will never be revealed on my face.

Abby Jergins
Wesson Attendance Center

CenterMorning Time

Ring, Ring the alarm clock sounds,
just another day in this little town.
I rise out of bed and what do I see,
Oh, it's just the sun peeking through
The blinds to greet me.
I stumble out of bed trying to find
My way, towards the bathroom to
Wash my face and along with other
Duties to get me on my way. At last
I'm almost finished with my morning
Dues, hurry up Mom says, you'll be
Late for school. I grab my things and
Round up the spastic little ones while
Thinking to myself this ride to school is
Going to be so much fun.

Sarah Stricklin
3rd Place, Poetry
Wesson Attendance Center

Emergency Room

A burden on her back she wore,
As she walked through the unsympathetic sliding glass doors.
With a baby in her arms, and a boy and girl at her side,
Clothes shabby but clean, neatly combed hair,
A hard and worn face, a look of regret it did wear.
"Wait here." She whispered softly to her child.
A tear rolled down her face, as she kissed and held each for a while.
She disappeared around a corner, but did not return.
The baby began to cry, as the minutes drug on.
A nurse came to take them away.
"Where is their mother?"
No one can say.

Celeste Deneen Collins
Scholarship Award, Poetry
Mendenhall High School

Secret

We shared a smile today
so carefully to retain our secret
one fleeting moment
the truth? In our hearts we keep it.

And then I winked
surely a closer call
you continued to smile
and I carried on.

I carried on for
I could not stay
the last thing I want
is to give our secret away.

I thought of you
a nights worth long
random thoughts in my head
contemplating this song.

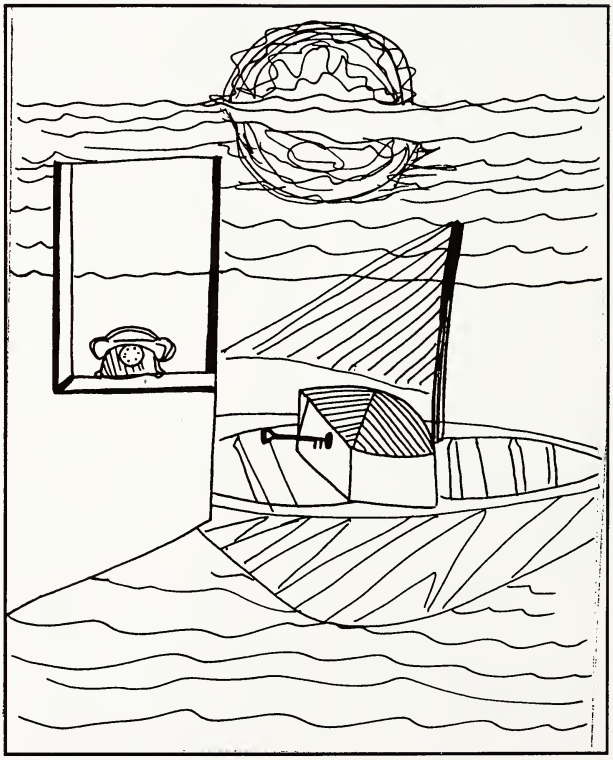
A song of happiness—
true and sincere
a new closeness—
peace when you're near.

Sharing an afternoon
talking to each other
you on one line
and I on the other.

Singing our praises
for our secret's kept
praising Graham Bell
for his boundless help.

Asking forgiveness
each day from above
blessings befall us
though our task's not in love.

I dare not speak your name
save when I'm alone
meanwhile, I wait
by the telephone.



Illustrator: Jessica Johnson

Adam Singletary
Third Place, Poetry
Copiah-Lincoln Community College

Zulu3

I want my willow alternative
Understanding my eccentricities
My God scream
And not think me crazy
Or Insane
My willow is only 2 1/2 seconds away
From a demented dimension of reality
Transporting us to our ancient African religion
Fire so clean, but he is only a boy
A Zulu3 pretending to adore what I need

When femininity is our evil
We sing our hates songs to the chief
Chasing the evil spirits away
Damned for blood
Cultural bleeding, menstruation that
Devalues man
Devalues the trees.
Devalues virile enterprises
World's divide
As love falls down into the sea

I have heard it said that there are women that can mesmerize men with their voices – sirens – and if I swallow them whole and have them teach my inner strength to sing you to sleep would you still fear me, criticize my deep?

You are thunderous mountains and I am blossoming trees
Crowding the landscape with dreams of rain.
I climbed the stairs to your sacrifice

And I memorized the flaws in your torn skin
In your sacrifice to me
But I lost myself again so I cried
For the love I had in everything you would not be
Willow, I am your sacrifice to us
Waiting for you to love
The terms of my exodus
And our sensitivity.

Illustrator: David Crane

Allen Sutton
First Place, Poetry
Copiah-Lincoln Community College

I Am a Man

In reply to Ms. Maya, so phenomenal in her own
Right,
This is for all the women for a brother dark as the
Night.
I'm not handsome or built enough to impress your
Eyes,
A man by any standards, regardless of my shape,
Race, creed, or size.
I refused to be stereotyped, to fit into the world's, so
Called perfect mold,
Cause I ain't your ordinary, run off the mill, garden-
Variety, black man, in cause you ain't been told.
I am sensitive to a women, and as strong as any
Other man,
I respect the ladies, I give them all that I can, want,
And am.

I got power in my hands,
I got rhythm in my feet,
I got knowledge in my mind,
I command respect when I speak.

So maybe now you see and understand, why my
Head is held high,

Why my goals are my focus, and I reach for the sky,
Cause I am a man, my own man, that's me.

So Ms. Maya, maybe now you can see and
Understand,
Beside every phenomenal woman, there stands a
phenomenal man.

I know that to be the truth, though I stand alone, but
I am a man, my own man, that's me!

Brandy Mitchell
Wesson Attendance Center

My Love

As morning hues of sunset fire
caress your soft face.
Along with thee a pure desire
to worship untold grace.
My heart will sing
a silent prayer.
As ours press apart.
My love for you
is all too true and will never part.

Illustrator: Jessica Johnson

Brittany Greer
Wesson Attendance Center

Children

Bubbles floating in the sky
That pop on a small, chubby hand;
Laughter weaving among other noises
That is heard throughout the land...

Signs of children

Toys scattered around the room
That make a person fall
Shoes way too big
That are worn to look very tall...

Signs of children

Dirty faces
That are a mixture of mud and kool-aid
Sad faces
That cry when the sun begins to fade...

Signs of children

Hiding places
That are easy to find-
Words repeated
That are not always kind...

Signs of children

Loving everyone, even those
That don't love back;
Far too young to understand
That the world, loving lacks...

Signs of children

Misti L. Thornhill
Copiah-Lincoln Community College

77 Memories

Year the Memphis Pop-King died
and the world sang the blues.
I sat on the freezer while Mama
cried and put on my shoes.
"What happened Mama, why
are you so sad?"
"You're too young to understand
just what we had."
Year of a three-limbed cedar
Christmas tree
with only one gift between
my sister and me.
We found Christmas joy in
such other things:
goodie-baking, carol-singing
and chestnuts roasting.
Year I turned seven and my
sister twelve,
Mama said we were of age
to stay by ourselves.
"You're a big girl now,
and you don't need me."
"Oh, but I did Mama,
you just couldn't see."

Misti L. Thornhill
Second Place, Poetry
Copiah-Lincoln Community College

Campus Life

Behold the edifice; amber granite
stones encompass her contents,
while powdered dust blows in the
buttery breezes.

Along the way there are dung-piled
beds and such pretty pollution.
I see it all while propped on a
pauper's marble table, filled
with such senseless scribble.

Connecting, twisted, drooping;
wires connect this to that.
Wobbled wheels of a cleaning
cart and hideous humming
nearby cause me such distress.

A boy runs by me and
I long to catch his coat-tails.
I am a writer seeking my "cabin
in the woods" as Thoreau did.

It will not be found
among the cemented
sidewalks. Closing my eyes,
I see the woods Thoreau must
have seen.

There's a tree, not just any tree

but a photosynthetic protrusion
of such life I have never seen.
It draws from the death of the
soil underneath;

ancestors long buried and now worm food.
I open my eyes and begin to
compose. The ink well runs dry,
I've exhausted my soul.

Illustrator: David Easterling

Misti L. Thornhill
Copiah-Lincoln Community College

empty

Exposed; my hopes, dreams and fears
lay spread out as if on a table;
flat, cold surface for all to see
my soul.
Your tasteless empathy with
apt precision performs post
mortem on my barely palpable pulse.
Duh-dum, I love you;
Duh-dum, I'm scared;
Duh-dum, please see the truth.
Flatline, you failed the test.
I'm opened and shattered,
merely a hole.
Dig it a little deeper while
you are there. Let others form
a line to pass by and see all
these joyous things you've
brought to me: roses, rotted
and rank; passion, perverse and
pretend; lies, such lyrical lure.
Behold the abyss where my soul once
radiated and glowed.

Sarah Causey
Wesson Attendance Center

Love

The epitome

a crown of thorns, three bloody nails
a selfless sacrifice;
our many sins to countervail
He offered up His life

giving, hoping, always reaching
waiting, forgiving, always preserving

nail-pierced hands, a humble cry
"My God, why have You forsaken Me"
roman soldiers yelling "crucify"
He died to set us free

a sacrificial Holy King
hung on a wooden cross
to show He would do anything
to save a world that's lost.

Sholanda Cook
Brookhaven High School

Maya Angelou

Many, oh, Maya, you're a great poet
Growing up in the Great Depression.
Where, oh, where, I want to know
Did you get that inspiration?

When you were down you wrote "Still I Rise:
And told us why the caged bird sings
You gave a heated world a drink of water cool
And for your journey you wouldn't take anything.

Maya, oh, Maya, you have had hardships
But through it all you have come far.
People admire you as a phenomenal woman
And I admire you just for who you are.

Jessica Harrell
2nd Place, Poetry
Bogue Chitto High School

This Old School

Sauntering up to the weathering steps
Of the old school we used to love.
Gazing at the broken windows
Where the dust had not been disturbed.
Thinking of past years
That we shared when we were young.
As we crunched the broken glass
Scattered in the hallway.
A busy classroom with no one in it.
Hearing laughter, but seeing no smiles,
Remembering lessons we'd been taught.
Lingering memories in a vacant building.

Steven Vance
Copiah-Lincoln Community College

A Different Kinda Life

Standing here looking at myself, acknowledging
There are places of excitement,
adventurer and security I would rather
be. A life separate of mine,
miles away a different kinda
life.
Intently, I stare into my hopeless
eyes at happiness; wishing it
would come closer to me,
only in a different
kinda life.
There on future avenue with
my thumb out hoping to catch
a ride on one of the buses of time, they
passed me bye. Frantically, I pace back
and forward over the next step
I should make. Thinking of
a different kinda of life.
Relocation, creating motivation
no longer is a necessity for me.
Living a different kinda life
starts here within me. Come and
walk with me. Today can be the
start of a different kinda life. Don't
be afraid to see, explore and live the
life you **know** is meant to be.

Clarence Yeager
Copiah-Lincoln Community College

My World of Blue

I live in a world of blue,
Like a field of blue bells swaying gently
In a warm summer breeze.

My world is the endless sky above,
Where my might and thoughts flow undisturbed
By the whispers of white and gray clouds quietly passing my way.

In my world of blue,
My arms stretch to the heavens like a rainbow,
Embracing the beauty of the earth after the storm's rain has passed,
And knowing that all will be well.

In my world of blue,
I soar into the sky like a blue bird taking flight,
But is content to have its feet planted firmly on the ground.

My world is blue,
Like the waves of the ocean gently swaying and lapping against the shore,
With my thoughts and feelings running as deep as the sea is blue.

I live in a world of blue where curiosity never dies,
And I awaken each day searching for the wonders it brings.

Clarence Yeager
Copiah-Lincoln Community College

The Falcon's Flight

On a moonlight desert base,
The wings of the sleek, silver fighter jet cast an eerie shadow
On the sand covered tarmac.
They await the pilot's call that will take them into battle once more.

Who are the masters of these predators of the sky?
They call them the Gunfighters...and they are the best.

Twenty-four engines roar to life,
The shrill of their engines pierce the silence,
While flames of orange and blue light the dark desert night.
The joining of man and machine reverberate
Like a poor man's opera of sound and light.

With wheel chocks pulled and cockpits locked,
The procession of fighters will begin once again.
One by one they taxi in single file,
To the end of the runway to await their signal to go.

The deafening screams of the air raid siren sends a message to all,
The time has come for the falcons to fly.

The falcons rise slowly into the cool desert sky,
Like a feather floating on a gentle wind.
They are the hunters and not the hunted,
For tonight it is they who hunt for prey,
Because today Desert Storm has begun.

Jessica Mitchell
Brookhaven High School

Wishing

I wish I were a bird.
A bird with great wide wings.
I'd sail across the ocean blue.
And from my heart I'd sing.
I'd land upon a sailor's ship.
And talk to tattooed men.
I'd fly into a temple just
To hear the prayers ascend.
Then I'd go back into the world
And take flight upon the wind.

Illustrator: Jacob Smith

general essay

Channelle McCrory
1st Place, General Essay
Bogue Chitto High School

Remember

The possibility of me being able to remember all that I would like to when I am older is not very likely. I would love to be able to remember everything, but I know that can't happen. There is one thing I would particularly like to recall though.

The summer of my ninth year my brother and I decided we wanted to build a clubhouse. We found an appropriate spot deep in the bamboo thicket beside my house and set to work. We carried large branches and long sticks from far and wide in order to build it the way we wanted to. Somehow, after many weeks of working, we managed to form a dome shaped cavern around a rather large tree. I took us a whole month to finish, but after we did we spent every moment possible in our club.

Hours were spent scavenging the woods for car parts or logs of various shapes to serve as our "furniture" and our "appliances". The best part was that the club was our secret. Our parents never knew where it was or even that it existed. Every morning we would set out, telling our mother we were just going out to play. As soon as we hit the tree line we would run as hard as we could until we reached our play place.

I went back to that house a couple of years ago, and while I was there I decided to take a walk in those same woods. I came across that old club, and when I did my heart sank. Years of neglect had had its affect, but nevertheless it was still standing. The sad thing was, what had once served as my childhood resort now looked to me like nothing but some sticks leaning against a tree. I crawled in through the small opening, and looked around in amazement. So many memories came flooding back. The rusty transmission in the corner was once my "stove", but now I couldn't see the resemblance. The log in the middle of the space had been a "couch", but now it was too small to

sit on. Nothing looked like I had once thought it to be, and that bothered me. Still, I left everything as it was, hoping some other lucky child would come across it and make use of it.

I learned a lot from this experience. The childhood imagination is a marvelous thing. Sadly, most of us lose the gift to pretend as we grow older, but it is something we can get back. So, I guess instead of remembering this particular event in my life, I would like to remember how to use my imagination, to look at things for what they can be, instead of what they are, and to make the best of things, even an old rusty transmission.

Illustrator: David Crane

Chris Hux
Brookhaven High School

The House

Once upon a time there was a little boy by the name of Blue. Blue Thompson grew up in Little Rock, Arkansas. Ever since he was born in 1862, he loved to read about haunted houses, well at least when he became old enough to read. He always told his mom that he was going to be part of a haunted house one day, but she did not know what he meant.

Blue lived as normal a life as any other blue-eyed, brown-haired, Southern boy did. The only difference was the fact that all of his leisure time went to reading instead of normal childhood play. His mama tried her best to get him to go outside with the neighborhood kids, but he told her that a book was the only friend that he needed. One day Blue's life changed forever.

Blue found out that his mom could no longer pay the rent for their current home. She tried to comfort him by telling him that they would find a new house to live in, but he told her that he could live in another house. His mom told him that they had to move out within a week. Blue looked at her, and he repeatedly changed, "I can never live anywhere else."

On the day of the move, Blue's mom gave him a kiss, and she said, "Everything will be okay, my darling boy." Blue knew that it wouldn't though. For Blue was no longer a child; he was now thirteen years old. He tried to act like he believed her for his mom's sake, but deep down he told himself that he would never leave his home. When his mom came to his room to tell him that it was time to leave, she couldn't believe what she saw.

Her baby boy had committed the unthinkable! She immediately called 911. When the police got there, they took his lifeless body down from the craftily-made hangman's noose. Blue had made a hangman's noose out of several of his mom's colorful scarves. He tied these scarves around a beam in his room, and he strategically placed a chair nearby. She cried just thinking of the pain that her baby must

have gone through when he stepped off that chair.

Two days later she stood there in the rain, as she watched family members throw flowers on his grave. Throughout the whole ceremony she stood motionless blaming herself for the loss of her baby boy. After the ceremony, she decided that she would make one last visit to the house that she and Blue once called home.

As she stood on the front porch of the old house, she felt her knees start to tremble. At first she started to leave, but she finally got the guts to turn the tarnished gold door know. When she stepped through the doorway and into the old living room, she felt the air on the back of her neck stand straight up. Then she noticed that even though it was nearly ninety degrees outside, she was breathing smoke in and out. It looked like she was smoking a cigarette, but she wasn't.

All of a sudden she heard a faint voice calling out, "Mama, Mama, Mama!" She froze immediately and glanced down the hall toward the voice. The voice was familiar, and it was coming from Blue's old room. She began to slowly creep down the hall, and she still heard, "Mama, Mama, Mama!" When she looked inside Blue's old room, fear took over every inch of her flesh. In the corner she saw a little boy sitting facing the wall. She asked, "What's wrong?" Then the boy looked straight at her and said, "I told you that I would never live in another house."

Jessica Phillips
2nd Place, General Essay
Wesson Attendance Center

My Life's Inspiration

I awakened this cold, dreary morning dreading, as usual, the gruesome chore that was awaiting me. Every morning for the past nine years I had often wondered why in the world I had begged my parents for a horse. And not just any horse, but a show horse, one that required feeding, extensive grooming, and exercising on a daily basis. And for the life of me, I can't remember anyone at the time mentioning that this animal had to eat his breakfast every morning at 6 o'clock come rain or shine.

As I pulled on my last mud boot and trudged slowly toward the barn, I recalled how just moments earlier a sleepy voice had whispered an offer of help. I knew his gesture was sincere. Christopher is always serious when it comes to completing a task. I thanked him as I pulled the covers up around him and convinced him to go back to sleep.

As I finished putting hay in the stall and filling up the dry water buckets, I was reminded to thank God, as I do nearly every morning at this time, for the physical ability to complete my chores with such ease. I also remember at this time to say a prayer for Christopher, the greatest inspiration of my life.

Christopher was born with a rare condition called Congenital Femur Deficiency. This disease usually affects the growth of one of the two thighbones. At birth, Christopher's right leg was only half the length of his left leg. The disease had also affected the foot on the longer left leg, leaving it badly deformed. As a common practice with patients suffering from PFFD, amputation of the shorter leg was recommended before Christopher's first birthday. They would then attach a prosthesis that would be changed as he grew. My parents struggled with the decision that was to be made. They didn't feel right about taking something from Christopher that was not theirs to take.

After many sleepless nights and much prayer they felt that God had other plans for Chris. They began searching for surgeons that could offer a glimmer of hope in saving Christopher's foot and leg. In those first few years their attempts were met with disappointment after disappointment, but their faith was not shaken. Although Christopher was an extremely happy child, I can remember how at times it broke my heart to watch him scoot around on the floor because he was unable to stand or walk. Finally, when he was about two years old, Chris was fitted with a shoe that had a lift on the bottom. This was suppose to give him the capability to stand and walk. Christopher, however, was insecure and refused to try. Then one night as we were decorating the Christmas tree something happened that I will never forget as long as I live. As the lights were lit on the tree, Christopher stood and walked without missing a step. It was the greatest Christmas gift that I will ever receive.

By now my mom was doing much research in a new medical breakthrough that would allow for bones to be lengthened. It would take her the next ten years to locate the surgeon that would recommend this procedure for Chris. Today at the age of eleven, Chris has undergone surgery on one hip, one foot, and one leg. This past summer our prayers were finally answered when Christopher was evaluated by a surgeon in Dallas who recommended him as a bone lengthening candidate.

I know that Chris has suffered great physical and emotional pain at times. His foot is covered with huge, overgrown calluses that are painful from the prosthesis rubbing daily. I also know that more than anything he wants to play sports. I believe that someday he will, but for right now he is satisfied to fulfill that dream through me.

Together we make quite a team. This past year he practiced with me shooting the basketball, and this year our coach made special provisions for him to be our basketball manager. He attended every softball game and was my greatest cheerleader. He was also the one that encouraged me to practice my tennis shot, when I would have rather been doing other things. And once when I was preparing for a track meet, he insisted on running with me. I knew that Christopher was in pain, but he wouldn't give up, and he wouldn't let me quit. I ran that night with tears in my eyes but an overwhelming love and admiration in my heart. This past year I was awarded the Miss Hustle

Award in basketball, the Most Improved Player in tennis, and the Most Valuable Defensive Player in softball. I share these accomplishments with Christopher whom I have never heard complain and does not know the words, "I can't". As I continue through high school, I know that I can depend on Chris to offer encouragement when I'm down, to motivate me to my highest potential, and above all, to renew my faith when I'm doubtful.

As I return from my trip to the barn, I checked on Christopher who is sleeping so peacefully. He is everything that God made him to be, and he is living up to be all that God wants him to be. I am so proud of him. Thank you again, Lord, for all my blessings, but above all, thank you for sending me such an inspiration – my loving brother, Christopher.

Illustrator: John Graham

Chad Ervin
Lawrence County High School

Cancer and Smoking

Cancer is one of the most deadly diseases known to man. Year after year, thousands of people die due to some form of cancer. A vast majority of these people get cancer due to smoking. Treatments of radiation and chemotherapy are available to fight cancer, as well as having the tumor removed with surgery. Cancer is treatable and sometimes beatable, but treatments may also do more harm than good. Having a family member with cancer can also be a very trying time. With beloved grandparents passing on due to cancer, I know this all too well.

Around three years ago, my Paw-Paw, who was a heavy smoker, was found to have a lump in his chest. After numerous tests, the lump on his lungs was diagnosed as a cancerous tumor. Almost instantly Paw-Paw came to the conclusion to undergo treatments for this tumor. He went through treatments with few side effects. Nearly six months of harsh radiation and chemotherapy later, the tumor had all but vanished. Paw-Paw and our entire family were very excited after hearing this wonderful news. Everyone thought it was finally over.

A little more than one year later my Maw-Maw, who was a former smoker, began to get sick. Maw-Maw was not too fond of the doctor so she never went. My mamma, brother, and I finally talked Maw-Maw into getting an appointment. After viewing the x-rays, the doctors found a lump in her chest, just the same as with Paw-Paw. After tests were preformed, Maw-Maw was diagnosed with lung cancer. Less than a week later, the doctors also discovered that the cancer had already spread to her brain. After consulting with her family, she decided to go ahead with treatments. The treatments definitely began to take their toll on Maw-Maw. She became sick, lost weight, and also began losing her appetite. Maw-Maw became too weak to continue her treatments, and she came to stay with us so we could take care of her. A few days later Maw-Maw became so sick and so weak, we had to put her in the Lawrence County Hospital. Not

long after being admitted to the hospital, Maw-Maw lost her battle with cancer and moved on to a better place.

Almost one month later, during a routine checkup, a tumor was discovered in Paw-Paw's brain. Paw-Paw once again decided to go the treatment route. He went through treatments again with few problems. He actually gained a few pounds, but things eventually took a turn for the worse. He began to show major side effects. Paw-Paw began to do strange things during his sleep and would have to be put in the Baptist Medical Center in Jackson. My mother and I went to visit him the day after he was put in the hospital. While we were there, Paw-Paw lost his fight with cancer and passed on to a better place where he could finally be with Maw-Maw again.

This taught me a very tragic but important lesson: the things we do can come back to cause us a lot of trouble. Also, it taught me that no matter how advertisements depict them, cigarettes can be dangerous. I had already made up my mind as a child to never smoke cigarettes, and this traumatic experience only reassured me that I has made the right decision. Even though refraining from smoking is not going to keep me cancer-free, it will reduce my chances and I believe it is the choice for me.

Illustrator: John Graham

Katrina Norris
First Place, General Essay
Copiah-Lincoln Community College

Blaze of Fury

The night sky lit up with a spectacular array of colors as the fire forced itself through the trees. Orange, red, and yellow flashed through the treetops. The intense heat was unbearable and smoke consumed the air making it hard to breathe. The fire was hungry and eating away at everything it came into contact with. Stumps disintegrated as the fire passed by. With shovels in hand and adrenaline pumping, five courageous teenagers quickly began to fight the blaze of fury.

Everyone at the scene was trying to put our the fire. Forestry workers and firemen communicated with each other on walkie-talkies. Fire trucks pumped harder than ever to control the raging fire as bulldozers and tractors surrounded the fire trying to smother it. The five teenagers worked harder than all combined. "It's getting harder to breathe," Kat coughed. All five teen were blindly guiding each other out of the smoke. "If someone passes out of smoke inhalation, I hope you know what to do," Logan laughed. "We need a break; I can't see anymore, "Lauren coughed. Chad pulled his shirt off as a desperate attempt to cool off. Randy grabbed a shovel and threw dirt on the fire close to him. His bare feet were cool against the dirt. "Hey! Somebody is at the fence! Come over here!" Lauren yelled as she ran to the fence to talk to the forestry workers on the bulldozer. This gave the teenagers a chance to breathe fresh air. The wind had died down enough that they could see around them.

The helpers gathered to discuss what was going to happen next. Randy and Lauren went back to the house to call surrounding neighbors for help. The fire was dying down and all watched it gleam in the background. Firemen and forestry workers passed updates back and forth among themselves. Neighbors and friends were ecstatic with the news reports and a sign of relief was heard.

A tall slender tree nearby was glowing in the darkness, the sight was breathtaking. "We are just going to let that one fall. We will clear out the small stuff around it, "the forestry worker informed. Everyone stared intensely at the lonely tree. "Looks like it will fall soon," the watchers agreed. The fire slowly worked its way forms the top. The tree was soon split down the middle. The sight was terrifying and beautiful at the same t time.

The fire was finally under control and the brave teens ventured back to Copiah-Lincoln Community College. Exhausted, they fell into a well deserved sleep. Looking back they realize that real friends will help you in times of need. No matter how big or small the "blaze of fury," they are always there.

literary essay

Oktibbeha Smith
Wesson Attendance Center

Satan, the Fallen Angel

Paradise Lost is a poem written by John Milton about the fall of disobedient angels. *Paradise Lost* is as much an expression of Milton's own political, religious and philosophical views as it is a timeless universal epic. While Satan may not be the "hero" of *Paradise Lost,* Milton quickly establishes him as its main character. The Archfiend, as he is sometimes called, is the source of all evil and fiendish events in the poem. Satan is the head of a rebellious group of angels who have just fallen from Heaven at the opening of the poem. He was the originator of sin—the first to be ungrateful for the Father's blessings. He embarks on a mission to Earth that eventually leads to the fall of Adam and Eve, but also worsens his eternal punishment. Satan's heroic and ambitious behavior only deepens his desire to conquer God's created world, earth.

John Milton's *Paradise Lost* tells of Satan's banishment from Heaven. He and his partners in crime have plotted war against God and are now doomed to billow in the fiery pits of hell. Satan is a complex character with many meaningful qualities. The relationship between Satan's qualities and Hell's atmosphere tells more about why they seem to go hand in hand. Without Satan's features and Hell's tormenting aspects, the place would not be all that it is. Without the ambitions of Satan, hell would not be the way it is.

Satan opposed the throne and monarchy of God. The war in Heaven was between the forces of Satan and the forces of God. Because of Satan's involvement in this war, he and his followers were thrown out of Heaven. His disloyalty to God was agonizing and severe. Therefore, in spite of Satan's actions, God damned him to hell, a place full of all that he has refused and given up. After being cast out of Heaven by the Lord himself, Satan, known in Heaven as Lucifer, was not at all happy.

His unrepentant evil nature was enticing; even cast down in defeat, and he does not consider changing his ways: "To do aught

good never will be our task,/But to do ever to do ill our sole delight" (159-160) he insists. Satan is very ambitious by maintaining his belief that he can corrupt God's will and make evil out of good. Satan has a very big ego to think that he can underestimate God's overwhelming power. Satan was extremely punished for his unfaithfulness.

In conclusion, Milton states that on will "dwell in adamantine chains and penal fire" if he defies God. Satan definitely defied him and will therefore suffer from this. Chains are symbolic of Satan in that they will tie one down and keep him under control. Satan has disobeyed God and needs to be tied, restrained, and controlled. The fire is only to show Satan's primary intentions. Fire indicates evil and pain, both of which he is the cause of. He is the creator of all evil just as God is the creator of all good. Everyone knows that neither man nor immortal can defeat the man above no matter how many times Satan tried.

Sarah Stricklin
Wesson Attendance Center

Beowulf: Christianity vs. Paganism

Beowulf is considered to be the beginning of English literature. It represents a combined tribal history of the Angles, Jutes, and Saxons. Composed in an early, Pagan era, it is filled with such heathenish traditions as loud boasting, drunkenness, violence, and bloody attacks. The written version of *Beowulf* that we know successfully merges its original pagan aspects, from a time before Christianity, with a later added Christian standpoint.

Beowulf contains many examples of pagan practices. It is full of loud talk and boasting. At the beginning of the story, Hrothgar "...thought of greatness..." (4) as he built Herot. As "...his boast came true..."(17), a party was thrown full of drinking and merrymaking. This is what first disturbs Grendel from his lair. When Beowulf comes to give his help in defeating Grendel, his self-proclamation is prideful (173-181). Later, Beowulf brags to Unferth that "no man swims in the sea as I can...' (253,254). After his defeat of Grendel, old and young praise his bravery, saying "nowhere...was there a warrior worthier to rule over men." (510-513). Herot was built for the purpose of drinking in, and seems doomed from the beginning; Herot "Stood waiting...for flames to leap...to burn." (20-23). The violent and bloody nature of this time is brought out in Grendel's killings. It says that Grendel "relished this savage war...keeping the bloody feud alive," (89-95). "Killing as often as he could"(102), murdering "As he likes...no mercy, gorges and feasts on your flesh, and expects no trouble." (319,320). The people of these pagan times were very reliant on family and possessed a strict tribal loyalty. Hrothgar built Herot for his men, and although the people praised Beowulf, "no one meant to belittle Hrothgar, their kind and gracious king." (514,515). They practiced ceremonial gift giving. Hrothgar held a feast for the Geats, where they were given food, mead (a type of liquor), and entertainment. Hrothgar's wife Welthow was proud to be "offering mead to a hero who would help her afflicted people."(347,348).

Beowulf and his followers are also given gifts after the defeat of Grendel.

The poem also contains views coming from a Christian standpoint. The race from which Grendel comes from is described as "murderous creatures banished...Almighty drove those demons out...(they are) forever opposing the Lord's will and again and again defeated" (43-51). During Grendel's battle with Beowulf, it says he "discovered...what it meant to feud with Almighty God"(462-463). The poet shows a belief in God's control of human destiny in Beowulf's statement, "God must decide who will be given to death's cold grip."(462-463). The Christian belief of life after physical death is expressed in lines (123-125) "Hail to those who will rise to God, drop off their dead bodies, and seek our Father's peace" and also in Beowulf's reply to Unferth, where he says words "won't help your soul; you'll suffer hell's fires, Unferth, forever tormented."(125).

The poet seems conscious of his ancestor's pagan beliefs by telling of sacrifices to stone gods and the making of heathen vows. The poem states that they are only "hoping for Hell's support,"(113-114), and they do not know of God's help. I think that the poet added these Christian principles to deliver a message that God can defeat anything. Without these principles the poem would only be the story of a people drowning in a sea of evil and lost from God. The combination of Christian and Pagan views alike creates a contrasting effect.

Beowulf successfully merges these two aspects. It tells of a Pagan history but has been rewritten with a Christian point of view. the two blend together to tell a story of the past, but also give a glimpse of what could be in the future.

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Jessica Phillips
Wesson Attendance Center

The Fault Lies in the Creator

Sometimes, people create things and the opposite of what they intended is produced. One example could be Nobel's invention of dynamite. He never intended for the use of TNT to be so malicious. Some creations just go awry, but the creators still must take responsibility for them. In Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, much of the fault lies in the actions and decisions Victor makes after he creates the monster.

Victor Frankenstein has a dream to find the secret of creating life. After two years of intense study and work, he adds the breath of life to an eight-foot creature. The sight of the monster was so appalling that Victor storms out the room. Frankenstein remarks on the offensiveness of the creature, "Oh! No mortal could support the horror of that countenance. A mummy again endued with animation could not be so hideous as that wretch" (Shelley 57). He leaves the monster and hopes that their paths will be forever apart. If he only knew that their winding roads were meant to cross frequently, then Victor might have taken measures to destroy the monster in its infantile stages. Instead of being responsible, however, he chooses to leave the place where he lived and move back home.

Victor soon learns of the death of his brother and the blame being put on Justine who was a close friend and maid. In his heart, Victor knows the monster strangled William to death. The pleas of Elizabeth and Justine cut sharply into Victor's soul, but their prayers of help go unheeded. Victor talks of his agony by saying, "...I, the true murderer, felt the never-dying worm alive in my bosom, which allowed of no hope or consolation" (84). He nonetheless refuses to speak up in Justine's defense. The authorities soon convicted and sentenced Justine to death, and all he can do is stand idly by as she is hanged on the scaffold. His decision of silence catapults the soul of Justine to the heavens, as Frankenstein's own soul is doomed to hell on earth.

The monster vows to make Victor truly regret living. Victor believes that the monster is intending to kill him in front of Elizabeth on their wedding day. Instead of relating this vow to Elizabeth, he tries to prepare for the monster himself. He coos to her, "Oh! Peace, peace my love, this night, and all will be safe; but this night is dreadful, very dreadful"(185). Possibly, if he had enlisted the help of Elizabeth or even just informing her on the situation, she could have helped him to prevent her own death. Victor's mistake was to take everything upon himself instead of asking for help with his creation. This faulty decision caused the loss of the last thing that he truly cared about in his life.

Proof is evident that most of the faults can be put on Frankenstein. His monster did the killing. Victor denied the monster nurturement and direction. This denial caused the monster to not only look savagely, but also act savagely. Much heartache and death could have been hindered if he had only killed the seed before it grew and blossomed. Maybe then, there would be no faults to put on Victor, but his indecision to kill it or teach it gives Frankenstein the responsibility as creator. Barney Fife summed it up when he said "Nip it in the bud. You have to nip it in the bud."

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Illustrator: Sarah Adams

Katrina Sandifer
Copiah-Lincoln Community College

The Woman with a Heart of Gold

In her story "A Worn Path" Eudora Welty tells a story of a grandmother's love for her grandson. The grandmother is Phoenix Jackson, and Welty depicts this love by imparting three very distinct characteristics into her personality. Phoenix exhibits these traits in a journey she takes to town, which strengthens her character making her the heroine of the story.

The story commences when Phoenix shows her compassion for the only members alive in her family, her grandson. She does this by making a treacherous journey across the Old Natchez Trace to town. This is a trip that Phoenix does religiously, despite her old age and the perils she must face each time. Phoenix shows her unquestionable love and compassion by spending her last dime on her grandson. She displays this when the nurse gives her a nickel and she pulls the nickel out the hunter dropped and says, "I going to the store and buy my child a little windmill they sells, made out of paper"(99). This act of generosity and compassion is immanent in the character of Phoenix. This shows that Phoenix will go to great lengths for her grandson and sacrifice her own welfare to provide for him.

Another significant attribute Phoenix is endowed with, is bravery. Phoenix portrays this in the woods when she crosses a creek on a log. She mounts the log very securely and marches faithfully across with her eyes closed. this shows that she is not afraid of falling and is confident that she will make it across. Phoenix also displays bravery yet again when the hunter points his gun at her and asks if she is scared. She boldly answers, "No sir, I seen plenty go off closer by, in my day, and for less than what I don"(97). The characteristic of bravery is truly apparent because she could have withdrawn and began pleading for her life. Instead, she stands tall and faces the hunter tenaciously without blinking an eye. This reveals that Phoenix has been through a lot in her life. She has witnessed friends and family members being gun down and killed for a little of nothing. Bravery

has definitely played a tremendous part in Phoenix's personality.

Finally, one of the most obvious qualities Phoenix uses, is determination to conquer and predicament along the way. She shows this in all of the hardships in her journey. She comes upon a barb wire fence and reaches the other side safely. She also exhibits determination when the hunter tells her to go back home. Rather than being submissive and turning around, she uses an unyielding and determined voice and says, "I'm bound for town mister"(96). This lets the hunter know that she is intent on going to town, and there is nothing he can say to stop her.

Welty's character of Phoenix Jackson in "A Worn Path" can be depicted as having compassion, bravery and determination. All of these attributes are needed to accurately portray Phoenix's unique personality. These characteristics are evident in Phoenix's journey across the Natchez Trace. She makes this journey unselfishly without any regard for her own well being. Her only concern is to provide for her grandson. Phoenix Jackson truly has a heart made of gold.

Cerise Marshall
First Place, Literary Essay
Copiah-Lincoln Community College

African American Literature in America

The origin of African American literature is a direct result of America's conscience efforts to ignore and erase the history of African American culture. It evolved from the colonial Period, specifically between 1619 and 1808 extending from the arrival of the first cargo of Africans to Jamestown, Virginia to the end of the transatlantic slave trade. Black America has been recognized as a second colonial entity from 1619 to the present. As a separate nation African Americans were able to create their own written and oral literature from the basis of the European value system. When in slavery, African Americans sang work songs and spirituals to alleviate and to mask codes of escape; they told imaginative folk tales to retain African culture and to create lasting artistic forms; and they wrote poetry and prose to prove their intellectual capacity and to elicit antislavery support. The work songs, seculars, spirituals, and folk narratives are the foundation for the black poets.

African American literature owes much to some slaves who were fortunate enough to learn how to read and write such as Frederick Douglass and Nat Turner. Both men were abolitionists who had very different tactics to freeing slaves. Frederick Douglass believed that slaves could become free through education and he wrote brilliantly about the slave experience. At twenty-one Douglass used his literacy to forge papers, which allowed him to escape to freedom. He also lectured widely against the Fugitive slave law and used his fees from speaking to assist fugitive slaves obtain freedom.

On the other hand, Nat Turner was more radical with his approach to free slaves. Turner directed the most deadly rebellion by black slaves in American history. He thought that the conflict of slavery was a holy war, and his battle was not formulated as if slaveholders existed at peace with the slaves. Nat Turner helped dismiss that slavery was affordable in human lives. He kept alive the

public fear of the insurrection that had taken place on the Caribbean Island of Santo Domingo in 1795 and of the uprising by Gabriel Prosser at Richmond in 1800.

Another prominent abolitionist during the pre-civil war period was John Brown, a white American, who fought against slavery because as a lad he saw a black boy being severely beaten. At that moment, John vowed to become slavery's most determined foe. He believed that only a superior physical force such as a revolt could end slavery. Therefore, he led an attack on Harper's Ferry federal arsenal in Virginia to obtain weapons for his cause. Two months later he was caught and hanged for his radical act. The abolitionists had a phenomenal impact on African American literature because they served as a spark that ignited the fire of the revolution for civil rights.

The study of ethnic diversity is needed today in the education curriculum because it is unfair for minorities to be neglected of their rich heritage due to ignorance. There is no logical explanation for history to be based on what one culture alone thinks is acceptable. If there were no ethnic diversity classes, many people would have no knowledge of the numerous accomplishments made by minorities. People wouldn't understand the racial issues that are so prominent today. More importantly, Americans would believe the perception that white America has so adamantly tried to imprint in the minds of minorities; —they are inferior!

short story

Sarah Stricklin
Wesson Attendance Center

Stand Up

New Year's should have fallen on the first day of spring. The world seems to begin itself over, and I think more resolutions would be stuck to every year with this encouragement. Springtime has always felt like a new beginning for me. The colors make the world seem alive again after dull browns and gray and bare limbs that make a tree look as if it hadn't enough to eat. Pine trees are a comfort to me during the winter, for their branches are always green. Regardless, springtime always gives me energy. I get a feeling that I could change anything.

I was daydreaming as usual as Mr. Plott's voice droned on in the background. Mr. Plott is a short stubby man who seems to have permanent sweat stains underneath his arms. His face stays the same bright color of beet red. He is what I would call a perfectionist. Neat, in order, and in the correct place at the correct time. Everything runs on a schedule and schedules *must* be kept. An orange sign above his desk read PAY ATTENTION. I learned early in the year that it would not be very smart to draw unnecessary attention to myself. He always seemed stressed out.

While everyone else was supposably learning about cell mitosis, I was busy outside the window. I was sitting outside on the park bench beneath the cherry tree, which looked so much like an old lady with a white dress on. I watched the birds talk and play, and wished I could be one of them. I imagined what the wind would feel like in my face as I swooped down over the branches of the tall, stately oaks. I was in my usual position, with my head leaned over on my arm, so that I can appear to be following the text and still am able to stare out of the window. Pencils scratched on around me as notes were taken down. I doodled on the green glossy notebook that was my favorite and which contained no schoolwork. I sighed. A girl could never have as much fun in a 7th grade science class as she could outside. Sometimes even a strong imagination couldn't help.

Mr. Plott's voice caught my attention. "Could you answer the question, Peters?" I hated the way he called everyone by his or her last name. It was so impersonal. I turned my head in the direction of his gaze, and my heart immediately went out to the recipient. Arable Peters was a small stick of a boy, who had no more courage or gumption than he had meat on his bones. He had lived across the street from me for as long as I could remember. Earlier in the week he had walked around all day long with a sign that said SISSY BOY on his back. I couldn't remember why I hadn't taken it off of him. The week before that some boys in the 12th grade had smeared his chocolate pudding all over the back of his pants at lunch. None of them had even gotten in trouble for it. Obviously, Arable had been paying no more attention than anyone else, and squirmed under the firm, glaring gaze of Mr. Plott.

"What was the question?", he mumbled. My face burned with humiliation for him. I knew exactly how he felt. I had experienced it a million times throughout grade school when a teacher would call on me to take up the group reading. I never knew where we were at, for I always read on ahead, impatient of slow readers. Mr. Plott's face looked as if it would explode. He ranted and raved to himself about irresponsible stupid little twerps, although it was clear his words were directed towards Arable. I always thought public school teachers could not say things like that to students. If they can, there should be a law against it. Everyone snickered and giggled, partly at how funny Mr. Plott looked, but mostly at Arable. Tears had begun to roll down his face. Sometimes a person can only take so much and they come to a breaking point.

"Stand at the front of the class with your nose on the board until you can stop acting like a mama's crybaby and pay attention," Mr. Plott shouted. The tears fell faster and harder. Arabel's mother had died of cancer when he was only four. He slowly got up, though, and drug his feet to the front of the room. "Page 420!" Mr. Plott continued. Nothing could be heard but sniffles. The laughing continued quietly. My mind raged. How could anyone be so cruel? How could they all be so cruel?! Don't teachers realize that one embarrassing incident can scar a kid for life? They could spend their forties in a psychiatrists' office. Before I realized it, I was standing up. I walked to the front beside Arable. I pressed my nose to the board. My legs felt like rubber. They stiffened with the first chuckle I heard. All laughing stopped when I turned around and fixed my eyes angrily on the class. The crying stopped. Mr. Plott said nothing. I wasn't so mad anymore. The bell rang, and I went to get my books. I felt ten feet tall. I love springtime.

Celeste Deneen Collins
Mendenhall High School

Betrothed

A blood soaked cloth frightened me. It taunted me, hanging there halfway in light. Swaying back and forth, it almost seemed to call my name. "Shelly", it whispered, as it dripped. I then saw the path it had taken- a trail that was so evident on the milk-white floor. The minuscule scarlet red drops were like holes deep within my soul. I'd always felt I was missing something. I just never thought it would be represented in blood. Thinking of his death, I walked on, wholly disturbed by the cloth. I loved him so. His face was vivid in my mind. My tears had yet to dry, still fresh on my cheeks. Pressing on, I now was walking down a long bleach-white corridor. The ceiling barely missed my hair. Not that I cared about my hair, it was already mussed. Barely squeezing into the width of the corridor, I noticed that my arms seemed to be tied together in front of me. I blinked and kept my eyes drawn until I felt several gusts of wind sweep around me. It was almost as if I were floating above all humanity. I felt I'd left the corruption of mortality. I found my newfound immortality astonishing! Having now opened my eyes, I realized I was merely on a busy highway. This was where it happened. Blood was on the street. My heart stopped. I'd been there before. Strangely, I wanted to run. Not that anything was chasing me, but I knew it was his blood and I had to run. A heart wrenching scream broke my state of shock.

I awoke that morning covered in sweat. It was cold, or at least I thought it was. My condition had disabled me from differentiating between reality and imagination. Emma came in. She was my maid. I could see she was completely disturbed about something. Her face was all flustered with fear. She'd never looked like that before.

"I've never heard such a scream. Are you all right dear?"

"No," I said. Then, I began to cry. "It was happening all over again," I squealed. "I saw the trail of blood, only I didn't see his body." I became more confused then upset at this statement.

"Its okay child." She said. Though I'm twenty-one and was engaged to be married, she still calls me a child. I don't mind. She's been my mama. My birth mother died after I was born. They tell me she took one look into my precious hazel-brown eyes and God gently pulled her away. I believe she watches over me. Emma tells me all the time, "Before your mama died, she told me to watch over her baby. I've done my best. You've turned out very good." She always hugs me really tight after she says that. Sometimes I wish daddy had married her instead of keeping her on as the maid.

My dad died about three years ago. I never really knew him. He was always away on business. Emma's my family now that God has chosen fit to take my Charles from me. Charles was my fiance. He cherished me and I him. Endless memories of him cloud my mind. We first met at the age of eleven. He was the new boy in town and every girl had their eyes set on him. I'm not the fast type. Sensing that, he came right to me. It only took one look into his eyes for me to realized I'd made a lifelong friend. Remembering his manner prior to that fateful day only deepens my sadness.

Charles Legion-DeBourgh III, my beloved, died only a year and a half ago. He was in his prime, having full, pouting lips, forest green eyes, milk-white teeth, well-groomed curly black hair, and a strong, lean figure. God had wrapped all this in golden brown skin. The arch of his back alone would conjure up something like fire within me. How I miss him. We were soul mates. Both having problems, we were each other's shelter in the storm. He was a mulatto. His mom had died too and his dad had given him the best schooling offered, much like my loving father had done. Reticule never swayed him from his resolve to ask my hand in marriage. Imagine. I was going to be Mrs. Michelle Armana Legion-DeBourgh. It was going to be great. We wanted kids. We didn't care how many, as long as they were hard workers like us and they were healthy. God didn't bless our union.

Charles died two weeks before our wedding day. We'd planned everything. We were on our way home from church. It was raining, hard. A foggy mist blanketed the ground. Vision was terrible even within the few immediate feet before the car. Something crossed the road. I've never gathered what it was. The next thing I knew, we slammed into a tree. Somehow we both managed our way out of the car. I had no trouble, but Charles took a minute. He had worn his

white shirt to church that morning. It was now stained with his blood. I saw the source of this blood (his nose and forehead) still dripping. Every drop sent a horrible quake up my spine and seemed to burn holes in my soul as they landed on his shirt. I ran to him. He'd fallen to his knees. Blood now came forth from his mouth. Scared to death, I screamed into the mist crying for help. So vivid in my mind are the mangled car, the tree, and my Charles.

With his head pressed close to my chest, I told him, "It's okay. Remember how we said we're going to have a lot of kids? Well, *we* can't have any if you die on me. Don't die on me!" Then, I prayed, screaming out to God that he couldn't take the single soul I loved more than Emma's. "God," I sobbed, " I know you love us both and you know best. Please, oh Lord, please don't take my Charles from me!"

Next, Charles gazed up at me. I then heard the weakest, most solemn words I'd ever heard come out of Charles. He seemed to muster all the power within him to say it. It must have been the only thing on his mind. "Shelly," he said in a hushed tone. With that, he died. I let out such a scream that would intimidate even the very banshees of hell. Refusing to settle, into the darkened sky I cried, "Why, Lord, why?" God had no pity on me that day.

Being the only one of its kind, that dream of the accident haunts me at every corner. I've found it unbearable. Lucifer has entered my life and he tells me it's over. So, having drawn my last breath, I must request one thing. Once I am dead, bury me betwixt my beloved Charles and my guardian mother and have Emma put the following on my grave:

"HERE LIES CHARLES LEGION-DEBOURGH III'S
BETROTHED, MICHELLE ARMANA LEGION-DEBOURGH,
MOTHER OF NONE, DAUGHTER TO MANY,

BELIEVER IN GOD, SCAVENGER OF LIFE."

Oktibbeha Smith
Wesson Attendance Center

Too Late

As she lay in her bed, Jade thought of her future. Her silky pink bedspread was covered with college and job applications. Her mother yelled from the kitchen, "Jade dinner is ready." Jade got up and came into the kitchen like a zombie so tired and stressed. Never had she had so much pressure and stress from anything, except her battle with AIDS. Jade had struggled with the disease from birth. She contracted it from her father, whom had contracted the disease from a blood transfusion.

After dinner, Jade stumbled back to her room thinking how could she attend college without the support of her father. He had died after struggling for years with the terrible disease. It had been a year since her father's death, and Jade was still not over the loss. Her mother also had the deadly disease but had learned to deal with her pain. Jade never tried to deal with her emotions about her disease or her father's death. She just wept everyday.

Jade was a very beautiful young girl, and she excelled at everything she did. Her classmates nor her teachers, ever knew that something was wrong with Jade until the death of her father. Jade was a senior in high school, and she used to be a straight-A student until her father died. Her grades dropped, she lost weight, and she barely slept. Her teacher, Mrs. Jackson asked her what was wrong, but Jade only replied, " I just miss my father." She was sent to counseling, but it didn't work. Jade was a different person.

A couple of months before her graduation, Jade began to fill out some of her applications. She slowly mailed them off. She didn't want to go to college at all, but if she did go, she wanted to attend UCLA. She was accepted into every college she applied for, except UCLA. The college hadn't responded to her. This made Jade very distraught, and she didn't take her medicine for a couple of weeks.

A month before graduation, Jade got very sick, and she was placed in the hospital. Her secret was finally out. All her classmates

finally knew about her deadly illness. Jade was so embarrassed by the thought of knowing that all her friends knew that she was dying. Her friends didn't seem to care, and they all came to see her in the hospital. She told all of them about how she contracted the virus, and how she has struggled with it every since she was born. Her classmates were astonished at how much will power she had. One her friends said, " Wow girl, I always thought you were perfect." Jade just laughed and thanked them for coming. They all left, and she fell asleep.

Jade stayed in the hospital with her mother by her side. She was in a better condition than she was, but she still had liaisons all over her body. She was also losing weight and her hair. Her mother told her she was still her beautiful little girl, and Jade just smiled. It was almost a week before graduation, and Jade was still in the hospital. She was determined to walk across that stage with all her friends. A week passed, yet Jade was still in the hospital. Her condition had worsened, and an hour before the graduation ceremony, she died from the disease that had haunted her her whole life. After her funeral, her mother found a letter from UCLA in the mailbox. They had accepted Jade into their college, but it was too late.

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Death Penalty Deters Violent Crimes

In his essay, Senator Thurmond attempts to convince the public of the necessity of the death penalty. He tells of several incidents when he believed that the death penalty was appropriate. He was persuasive, and he got his point across to his audience. However, this is not a good deductive argument.

Senator Thurmond believes that the death penalty will "deter crime and protect the public." He believes that a law that does this is just. But who will be the one to judge? Who decides what is just and what is unjust? One person may believe that the death penalty is just, while another may think it is inhumane. There is no know evidence that proves it to be just. Who are we, as human beings, to decide if a person gets to live or die? Do we have the right to "play God?"

The senator points out that the American public supports the death penalty. Because of this support, he believes that the death penalty is just. However, what kind of track record does the American public have. Did our society not legalize abortion? Do we not have an unlimited amount of drugs and alcohol for anyone who wants it? Our former president had a highly publicized affair that made our country the laughingstock of the world. When one of our citizens was caned in Singapore for vandalism, the whole country flew into a state of panic. Yet, Senator Thurmond believes that we, as the esteemed American public, have the right to decide that the death penalty is just.

The senator tells three stories of brutal murders, which are meant to convince us that the death penalty is just. Based on these stories, how can we form rational opinions and decisions? They are told to make us feel sorry for the victims. If we act on these stories, we will be responding to our emotions. True, the victims suffered and died horrible deaths that no person deserves. But we cannot base our feelings towards the death penalty on these occurrences alone. We have to look at the issue of capitol punishment itself. Our emotions must be put aside.

The death penalty is obviously a very controversial issue. Many people support it, and in the same respect, many people oppose it. Everyone must form his or her own opinions. Nevertheless, our opinions must be based on statistics and facts, not emotions and the opinions of others.

Illustrator: Jacob Smith

Marcy Smith
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My Greatest Accomplishment

The summer had started out perfect. I was having fun with a few of my friends every day at the pool. Around the middle of the summer though, things changed. Everything seemed as if it was going to be just another hot day at the pool; however, I didn't realize how wrong that I would be. I didn't know that this day would affect me for many years to come and become the greatest accomplishment of my entire high school career.

The day started off very droll. Two lifeguards were on duty that morning, Karen Sasser and Corey Lofton. One was stationed at the shallow end of the pool while the other cleaned the skimmer baskets. A handful of people occupied the pool that day, but only two or three were swimming. I had been swimming for a while, and I decided to get out for a bit. As I was climbing out of the deep part of the pool, I heard a blood-curdling scream from one of the mothers. I thought that their child may have shown them a frog, which was a usual sight, but I was wrong. A child had jumped off the diving board and lost his swimming floaties. At this moment my instincts kicked in, and I knew I had to do something.

The cool water was completely surrounding me, and my arms were cutting through the water before I realized what exactly that I was doing. As I swam toward the boy, I realized that I had to save his life. The lifeguards were oblivious to what was happening until the frantic mother rushed by where they were talking. Quickly, I supported the child so he could keep his head above the water, and I started pushing him up out of it. The frantic mother helped me get the child out of the water. I was so scared, yet there was another feeling there. That feeling was pride. I had saved a child's life.

From that point on, I decided that I wanted to be a lifeguard. I wanted to be able to save a person's life. The next year, I became a lifeguard at the age of fourteen. I was soon hired at the Family Swim

Club at this young age because they were in need of some lifeguards. I felt such a huge sense of accomplishment because I made my dream come true. I think back to my experience five years ago. I might not be a lifeguard now if it wasn't for two young people's carelessness.

I feel so good about being a lifeguard because I know if someone needed help, I could provide it. Now, I am seventeen and have been working at the Family Swim Club for the past four summers. This task is the ideal summer job for me. It's no easy task, but I try my best every year to improve my lifesaving and CPR skills by keeping up-to-date with my training. I thank God that I'm able to continue my job every summer and that I am able to do this to the best of my ability.